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**Harrington Woman Pleads Guilty to Federal Fraud and Identity Theft Charges**

Bangor, Maine: United States Attorney Paula D. Silsby announced that **Doris Amanda Ayala Escalante**, 39, of Harrington, Maine, pled guilty on October 10, 2007, in U.S. District Court in Bangor, Maine, to Fraud and Misuse of Visas, and to Conspiracy to Employ at Least 10 Illegal Aliens. Escalante faces a possible sentence of up to 10 years and a fine of up to \$250,000, or both.

Court records reveal that in 1993 Escalante, using an alias of Amanda Ayala Centeno and claiming to be a Guatemalan citizen, applied for asylum in the United States. Using the same alias, Escalante applied for and obtained Employment Authorization Documents and a Social Security card. In 1999 Escalante, using her own name and claiming to be Honduran, applied for and was granted Temporary Protected Status and Employment Authorization. Escalante claimed that she had never before applied for employment authorization documents and stated that she did not have a social security number. Fingerprint evidence indicated that Doris Escalante and Amanda Centeno were the same person.

Escalante and her husband came to Maine originally as migrant workers in the late 1990s. They eventually opened a Mexican store and restaurant in Washington County. In 2005, the owner of ISF Trading Co. contracted with Escalante's husband, Juan Centeno Perez, to provide labor for ISF's sea cucumber processing plant in Lubec, Maine. Escalante assisted in the running of the business. Escalante admitted that she knew many of the workers employed at ISF were not in the United States legally and were not authorized to work in the United States.

United States Attorney Silsby praised the investigation conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Bruce M. Foucart, special agent-in-charge of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Investigations in Boston said, "ICE is committed to aggressively enforcing the nation's immigration laws by seeking criminal prosecutions of individuals who purposely circumvent those laws, often for private financial gain."

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